



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
New Orleans District

Project Fact Sheet

Official Project Name

West Baton Rouge Riverfront Development

Location

The study area is the whole of West Baton Rouge Parish, which is shown on the first map at the end of this report. However, because the Congressional authorization is for a study of riverfront development, the study necessarily concentrates on the portion of the parish fronting the Mississippi River and particularly on the various communities located on the river. West Baton Rouge Parish is located in central Louisiana across the river from Baton Rouge, which is the state capital and is located in East Baton Rouge Parish. The two parishes are connected by the Interstate 10 Bridge on the south and the Highway 190 Bridge on the north. Particular attention is paid to the riverfront of the West Baton Rouge community of Port Allen because it is the largest city in the parish, has a strong historic connection with the river, has significant riverfront development potentials, has already secured some riverfront development features, and can act as a center from which riverfront development can radiate to the rest of the parish. One of the major features of the proposed project is a bicycle/multipurpose path that would extend from Port Allen north to the Highway 190 Bridge and south to the towns of Brusly and Addis. This feature would extend riverfront development to a substantial portion of the parish contiguous to the river and to all of the major communities located along the river.

Purpose

The primary purpose of the study was to determine whether there is a Federal interest in participating in riverfront development and riverine preservation, restoration, and enhancement in West Baton Rouge Parish. The specific Federal interest emphasized by the study is benefits that would be generated by recreational features that would be located on the levee and the batture (the land between the levee and the river). Federal interest implies that the National Economic Development (NED) benefits must exceed the project costs for traditional water resource development projects. NED benefits were determined in this study through an economic analysis and the development of a benefit/cost (B/C) ratio in agreement with current regulations and policies. Riverine preservation, restoration, and enhancement benefits do not require a B/C comparison and were considered qualitatively in this analysis. Another major purpose of the study was to determine whether there was a willing and financially capable entity that would serve as the local sponsor for the project and provide the non-Federal cost share, as required. Overall, the major focus of the study was to determine whether riverfront development in West Baton Rouge Parish should proceed to the next phase consistent with the study authority based on preliminary determinations of costs, benefits, engineering considerations, environmental impacts, and local sponsor commitment.

Background

Corps of Engineers involvement in riverfront development planning in West Baton Rouge Parish began in 1995 with the formation of the West Baton Rouge Riverfront Development Task Force, which included the West Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce, the City of Port Allen, and the Port of Greater Baton Rouge, as well as other public and private groups. The activities of the task force quickly centered on Port Allen, which is located on the Mississippi River, is the largest city in the parish, has significant riverfront development potentials, and can act as a center from which riverfront development can radiate to the rest of the parish. Maps of West Baton Rouge Parish and Port Allen are contained at the end of this report.

A Planning Assistance to States (PAS) Study was initiated, which led to the production in 1996 of five conceptual design alternatives for the development of Port Allen's riverfront. Congressional authorization was secured through the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1999 to continue these planning efforts through the development of a justification report, but funding was not available. In 2000, the City of Port Allen and the Corps entered into a PAS agreement to investigate the possibility of constructing a 1,600-foot promenade and river overlook on the levee at Port Allen.

In 2002, the Corps received funding to advance the WRDA '99 directive to pursue a justification report, which was completed in 2003 and is included as an attachment to this 905(b) Analysis. Also in 2002, the City of Port Allen completed a revitalization plan for its old downtown area, which is contiguous to the levee. In 2003, Port Allen successfully applied for TEA-21 funds through the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development to construct the levee promenade and river overlook, which were completed in mid 2003.

The justification report and the 905(b) analysis were produced through direct Federal appropriations and provide a recommended comprehensive plan for the development of Port Allen's riverfront. The plan contains two parts. A set of recreational features is proposed that would be constructed under Federal authority on the riverside of the levee, including a wharf structure, multiuse recreation areas, playing fields, and bicycle/multipurpose paths that would provide for public access, educational, recreational, and interpretive opportunities. This set of features, along with landside parking, is referred to as the Corps Project. A set of complementary features is recommended for the landside of the levee that would be constructed through private and public investments and that would include such things as street and utility improvements, a hotel, condominiums, apartments, an assisted living facility, retail establishments, offices, and civic buildings. This latter set of features is designated the Port Allen Revitalization Initiative (PARI) to indicate that it is a constituent of Port Allen's downtown revitalization effort. These two sets of features would be joined by the existing levee promenade and river overlook.

This 905(b) Analysis is concerned solely with the features of the proposed Corps Project, which is a stand-alone project that is not dependent on the PARI features. One of the major features of the proposed Corps Project is the bicycle/multipurpose paths, which would incorporate the existing levee promenade and extend to the north to the Highway 190 Bridge and to the south to the Port Allen Lock and the towns of Brusly and Addis, which are located on the river. These linkages would extend riverfront development to a substantial portion of the parish contiguous to the river. Commitment to the Corps Project is indicated by the participation of potential sponsors

in the planning effort and the prior acquisition of the levee promenade and river overlook. Beneficiaries of the Corps Project would be the residents of Port Allen, West Baton Rouge Parish, Baton Rouge across the river, the region, and tourists and can be successfully argued as a project with local, regional and national significance.

Although the Corps Project is a stand-alone project, it could serve as a catalyst for the development of the PARI features. Commitment to the revitalization of the city's downtown area is shown by the participation of the city in the planning effort, the prior acquisition of the levee promenade and river overlook, ongoing land acquisition and clearing, and the recent decision by the city to locate a new municipal building near the levee.

This 905(b) Analysis is structured in keeping with Exhibit G-2 of ER 1105-2-100 and includes sections on study authority, study purpose, location of project/Congressional district, discussion of prior studies and reports, plan formulation, identification of Federal interest, preliminary financial analysis, summary of feasibility study assumptions, feasibility phase milestones, feasibility phase cost estimate, recommendations, potential issues affecting initiation of feasibility phase, views of other resource agencies, and project area maps.

Authority

The study was authorized through Section 517 of WRDA '99, which states: The Secretary shall expedite completion of the reports for the following projects and, if justified, proceed directly to project preconstruction, engineering, and design:...(5)Mississippi River, West Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana Project for waterfront and riverine preservation, restoration, and enhancement modifications.

Progress to Date

905(b) and Justification Report submitted to MVD March 2005.

Partners/Sponsors

The City of Port Allen – cost share local sponsor (www.portallen.org)